

US-UK Military Presence in Syria Contributes to Escalating Conflict on Jordan-Iraq Border

By [21st Century Wire](#)

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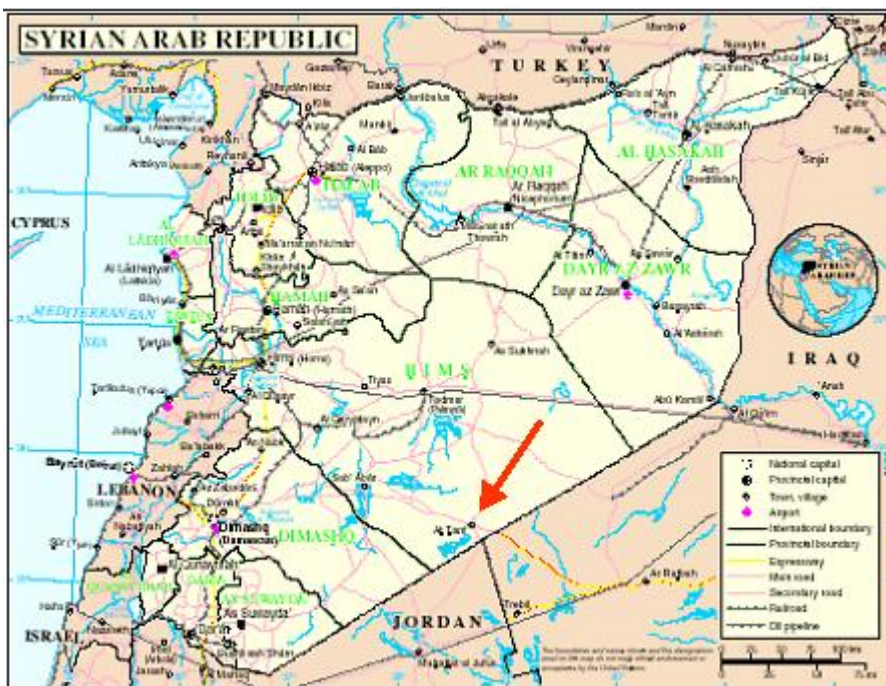
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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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In southeastern Syria, the region around al-Tanf has quickly become a focal point for the ongoing conflict in the region. Near to both the Iraqi and Jordanian borders (see map below), al-Tanf is currently the location of a contingent of US-led coalition forces, supposedly there for the purpose of providing training to 'anti-ISIS' militias, but also anti-Assad militias too – the fabled 'moderate rebels'. Not surprisingly, the US-led coalition has unilaterally imposed a self-styled '[deconfliction zone](#)' around their camp in al-Tanf and claim to be defending their position from 'pro-Syrian forces', otherwise known as the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and allied militias. It has been reported by mainstream media outlets that coalition members represented at al-Tanf include not only the United States but also the British SAS, and also possibly Norway too.



Although coalition forces are also present in other parts of Syria, including the area around Raqqa, an ISIS stronghold, the last few weeks have seen coalition forces striking Syrian military targets on at least three occasions near the coalition training camp close to al-Tanf – including incidents on [May 18th](#), [June 6th](#) and [June 8th](#). It is now being [reported](#) that the US is supplying “truck-mounted long range missiles” to its forces near al-Tanf, in a move that risks immediate escalation in the already-tense situation, and despite diplomatic efforts by Russia to calm the situation. All this comes as the US and its Kurdish proxy militia, the SDF, mount their attack on the ISIS stronghold Raqqa in Northeast Syria. The US have also seized the opportunity to invade more Syrian territory after an [alleged sarin gas attack](#) on

April 4th that prompted President Trump to launch a missile strike on a Syrian airbase in retaliation.

In the following segment film two weeks ago, 21WIRE editor Patrick Henningsen speaks to RT International about the recent US strike on Syrian forces near Al Tanf. Henningsen explains how the US are taking advantage of the tension to secure its own territory inside of Syria:

US and Britain: A Policy of Deception

One could easily be confused by the narrative that is being spun by the US, Britain, and compliant mainstream media in both countries. Less than two years ago, in 2015, then British Prime Minister David Cameron [ruled out sending British ground troops](#) into Syria. In mid-2016, however, it [emerged](#) that British special forces were engaged in combat in the country. Between 2013 and 2015, former US President Barack Obama said on at least [16 occasions](#) that there would be 'no boots on the ground' in Syria, but then [changed his mind](#) in late 2015 when US Special Forces were deployed into Syria.

President Trump's statements are no less contradictory. On April 11th 2017, soon after his initial missile strikes on the Syrian airbase, Trump [said](#) that the US was "not going into Syria"; the current situation at al-Tanf simply contradicts that statement.

Since that time, both Britain and the US have been slowly ramping up their presence in Syria, ostensibly to fight ISIS. But by repeatedly striking at Syrian government forces - the single most effective fighting force against ISIS - the US and Britain [are actually helping ISIS](#) to achieve its objectives.

Note the mismatch between the US-led coalition's presence in Syria and how it's presented to the public. Not only do they claim to be fighting ISIS while at the same time indirectly *helping them*, but they also call their attacks on Syrian army targets 'defensive' - even though the Syrian military has never attempted to attack any coalition forces. And it is similarly ironic that these strikes against the Syrian military have occurred in what the coalition calls a 'deconfliction zone', where supposedly no conflict is allowed. According to security analyst [Charles Shoebridge](#):

"These are self-declared [US occupied] zones of 'deconfliction.' What they really mean there is that they are not allowing other people to enter these zones, notwithstanding that this is part of a sovereign country, Syria... What they mean is that actually conflict is allowed, and military forces, as long as they are American, British and their 'rebel' allies. They are not agreed deconfliction zones. Syria doesn't agree to them. Russia, which of course has established de-escalation zones elsewhere in the country, hasn't agreed to this. Consequently they really are, as [Russian Foreign Minister] Lavrov or his spokesman said, effectively unilateral zones."

And not only is the narrative confusing, it is also not given the highest priority among mainstream headlines, with many other prominent stories conveniently serving to occupy the public while the situation in al-Tanf escalates. In a week that saw [Congressmen shot at and injured](#) at a baseball practice, a massive [tower block fire in London](#) taking at least 17 lives, and the UK election aftermath continuing to be unresolved, one could easily remain

unaware of the escalating situation around al-Tanf in Syria. With the US-led coalition now directly and deliberately attacking Syrian forces, what has been a proxy war is suddenly growing more dangerous, and the prospect of a direct conflict between nuclear-armed powers looms ever closer.

As former British Ambassador to Syria Peter Ford remarked during a [recent conversation with 21WIRE](#), the British military has neither Syrian approval to be in Syria, nor international approval from the UN, nor even legislative approval from its own Parliament. The same applies to the United States; although the US Constitution gives the power to declare war exclusively to Congress, the US now has quite a long history of entering wars or using deadly military force *without* Congressional approval under the flexible guise of an 'Authorization of Force.'

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